



## Lesson A: What is a zine? What is the value of protest?

**Content Areas:** English Language Arts, Information Literacy

**Level:** Intermediate, Grades 7-9

### Overview

In this lesson, students explore the ways in which self-published zines can be used as a form of political protest. Students use the Barnard Library Zine Collection Online Exhibition entitled, "Elections and Protest: Zines from the Barnard Library Collection" to explore excerpts from zines with election and protest themes in small groups.

### Duration

50 minutes

### Lesson Objectives

Through participation in this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define zine
- Compare and contrast zines with corporate magazines, newspapers and other publications
- Summarize the political statement being made in a zine
- Synthesize different political statements from a variety of zines
- Collaborate with peers to complete a task

### Materials

- Corporate magazines (one for each group)
- Zines (one for each group)
- Access to the Internet, or photocopies of the zine pages from "Elections and Protest: Zines from the Barnard Library Collection"
- Chart paper or an overhead transparency

### Lesson Sequence

**Hook/Motivation (10 minutes):** Break students into small groups and give each group a copy of a corporate magazine and a copy of a zine. Give the groups five minutes to create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the two publications. What is similar about them? What differences are there? When time is up, ask a few groups to share out the similarities and differences they noticed. List their responses on a class-sized venn diagram using chart paper or an overhead projector.

**Direct Instruction (5-10 minutes):** Tell students that what they have just been looking at is a "zine." Define zine as a small, self-published magazine that is created to share or express ideas, not to make money. Ask students if they have ever seen a zine before. Tell students that there are many different types of zines, but that today you will be focusing on zines of political protest.



# elections and protest

zines from the barnard library collection

**Collaborative Activity (15 minutes):** Assign each group one of the zines in this online exhibit to examine. Give the groups 15 minutes to explore the zine online, and complete the graphic organizer, which will help them determine:

- The author's purpose in writing this zine
- What the author is protesting
- How the author uses words and phrases for protest
- How the author uses images for protest
- Whether or not the author's argument is persuasive

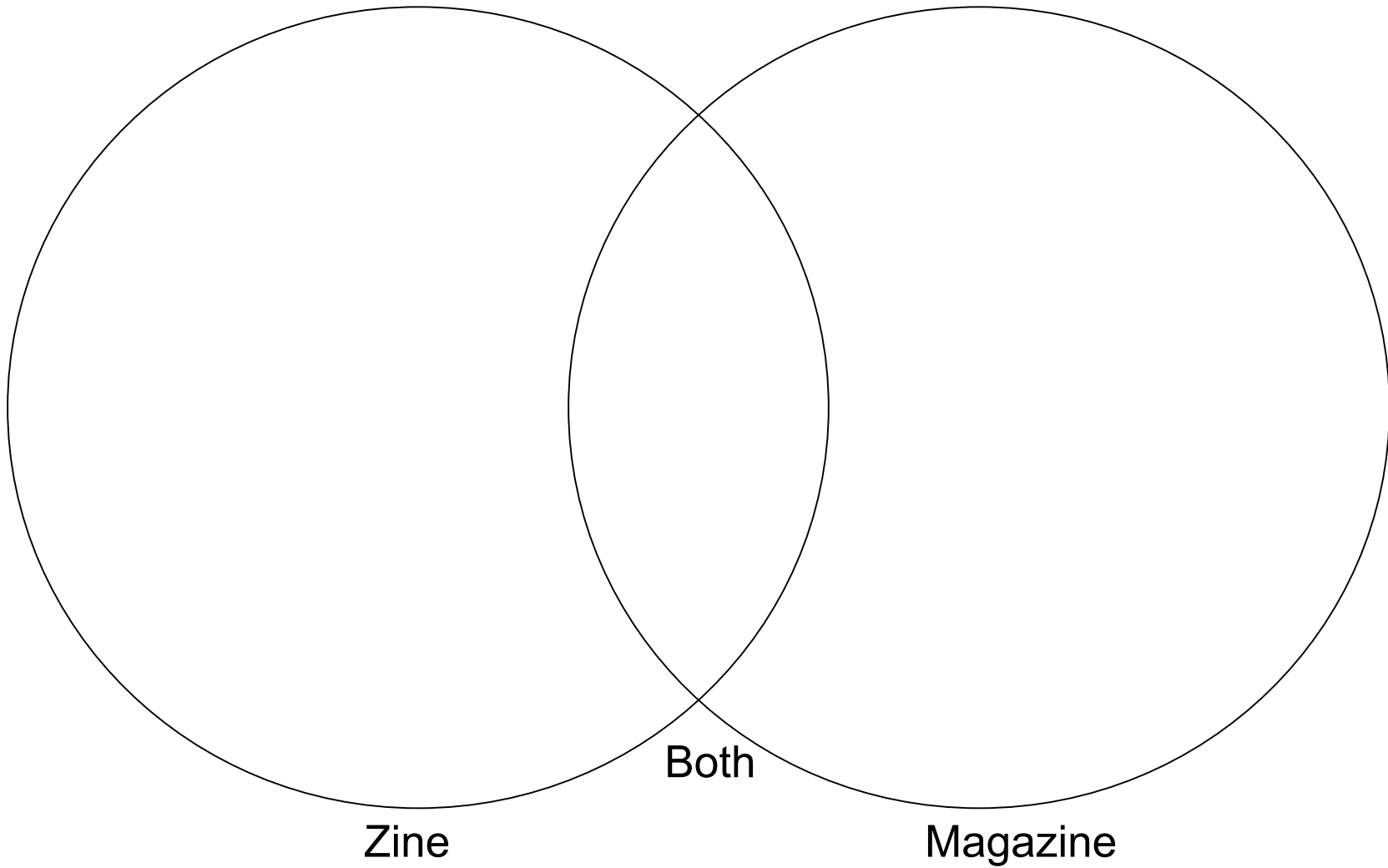
**Whole Group Discussion (10 minutes):** Ask a few groups to share out their thoughts about the zines. Then, lead a discussion in which the class explores why zines are or are not good tools for political protest. Why might zines be better than the corporate magazines you looked at in the beginning of class? What strengths do zines have as a genre for expressing ideas that might be controversial or considered "wrong" by the powers that be? How is writing a zine different from other forms of protest you may have heard of (boycotting, striking, sit-ins, violence, etc). Is writing a zine a form of passive resistance? Why or why not?

**Summary (5 minutes):** Tell students that even though the zines they looked at today focused on protesting elections and the political process, there are many other aspects of our lives that might be worth protesting. Ask students to think about what they might want to change about our political, social, or economic systems.

## Lesson Extensions

- Challenge students to make their own zines of protest by selecting an issue they care about. Use the zines in this exhibition as models, or order some from your local distro or independent bookstore. Provide art supplies including scissors, pens, paper, and clipart. Instructions for a simple 8-page zine are available here: <http://www.undergroundpress.org/pdf/Zines101.pdf>.
- Research the history of the alternative press movement. Look at zines as a form of protest from an historical standpoint. How are zines related to the colonial broadsides of the American revolution? How are they related to the anarchist pamphlets of the 1920s and 1930s? How are they related to blogs today?
- Look at zines as art objects. Deconstruct the genre, looking at how images and text work together to create an effective whole. What are the conventions of the genre? What does it value?
- Talk about rhetorical styles used in protest zines. How are their arguments structured? Are they effective or ineffective? Why?

## Comparing and Contrasting: Zines vs. Magazines



## Collaborative Activity: Analyzing a Zine

Title of Zine: \_\_\_\_\_ Author's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Copy or summarize some of the **words** the author uses to protest:

What is the author protesting?

Sketch or write about some of the **pictures** the author uses to protest:

How do you know?

The author's purpose in creating this zine was to:

We think the author was or was not successful because: